# Selected Poems by Matt Purland

## Playing In The Snow

We would run and hide But always find our way home We would talk in class But always do the work On the way to school we discussed the latest comics And we always ended up laughing

Every other day There'd be somebody's new joke Someone would be on And we would have to get them In the dinner queue we were cheeky to the older kids And we always got big helpings

In the summertime We would play at war Joining in a line with Twenty other friends and Scaring all the girls we Thought that we impressed them And they always mocked and pointed

What if I could now Tell that kid its story As it ran around And built its snow defences Playing in the snow Is all we ever dreamed of Hiding behind snowy walls and waiting

## A Modern Poem

I'd love To write a modern poem I'd love to feel The Freedom flowing through my pen. Like fuel No stanzas would I Being Young Have for What use have I for them? I would prey Upon my life Giving No excuse For my muse. I would write of my toaster Sleek and black and my toothbrush

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Which hangs Rocking In its rack.

Not art or life or love for I

**Eschew** 

The tools of romance. What use have I

For it?

Nor heroes of literature

Myth and verse

They make my rhymes

Worse.

For inspiration I would go to the front

Door

And look out.

Not to books

Do I look

Or a painting or two

Well, maybe a canvas

All covered with blue.

I do not need to feel

Pain

To be able to write

Not I

I look to a

List

For shopping

And revel in its bliss imaginary

Thinking

This is a poem

As true as Keats.

As brave as Yeats.

As full

Meaning is meaningless I abandon all thought of it

A poem is what you want it to be

What does it make you feel?

What does it say

To you?

What can you gather from its

Tangle of words

Is the key.

If you ask me what is its meaning

What is its point, its reason for being

You will be shown a smile.

Whatever you want

Friend

If you ask me isn't

This

A cop-out

I will reply

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This is a Modern poem.

The old

Rules do not apply I have no need for punctuation, wit or verve or anything chiefly which will make for you this a poem to cherish and

Love

Rhyme is a sin

Isn't it?

Unless

I wish to make a point. Alliteration adds mystery

To

My meaning

When

By happy chance

I implement it.

Nothing to swoon

Over

Here.

My everyday

Trials

Are

Laid

Bare

For

Your

Interest.

What is most interesting is

If you look

Closely

Αt

My modern poem

You will see

A collection,

Merely

Of sentences

Cut up

And

Splashed

Across your page

Randomly.

Like

A cup of spilt tea.

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# Selected Poems by Matt Purland

# On The High Wire

You up on the high wire You're so well balanced, so brave You're the one they all aspire to You walk a perfect way

You up on the high wire You're so skilful, you're so strong and The way you gently walk that wire I see nothing is wrong

But when you come down to earth I've seen you I've seen you crying
Because he's gone away, gone and left you
He's left you all alone

You up on the high wire All in sequins, you're a picture Everybody's got their eye on you – Holding their breath for you

But when you come down to earth I've seen you I've seen you crying
Because he's gone away, gone and left you
He's left you all alone

Up every night, every night My sweet child, you haven't got a choice But to come down, down, down

You up on the high wire Your faith is a slight wire Your face is a white fire Don't you ever think of him

Don't let him win

## **An Unruly Lamb Speaks Out**

Mum (What now?) What are you doing? (Eating grass) Why? You're always eating grass.

Is there anything else to do around and about? (I don't know)
Well, everyone just seems to eat grass all day
Do you like it then?
(You'll learn)

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## Selected Poems by Matt Purland

Mum

(What is it?)

There's a funny man looking at me

(He's just a rambler)

He's got a camera. He's coming towards us and seems to be pointing and talking

(Just ignore him. Look away)

I'm coming to stand underneath you for cover, get out of his road like

(Yes, that's it)

I'm just going over there now

(Where)

Over there, into that field

(This is our field)

But I wondered what's going on in that field, you know

If there's anything else to do

(Like what? Don't wander too far)

Mum

(What is it now?)

I've been into that field

(Right)

There are some cows there you know

(\*Fascinating\*)

Are you still eating grass?

(Er, ves)

But you can't still be hungry surely, can you mum?

(You don't understand a sheep's vocation)

What's a vocation mum?

Will I be a sheep one day?

(With luck you will. With skill, ingenuity and cunning. Just keep eating the grass. Don't look anybody in the eye, that's the thing)

And will I eat grass all day mum, like you?

(Whether you want to or not my son)

Don't you ever get sick of it?

Have you ever thought of eating anything else?

Hey – a bumblebee. Look. Look at him!

I can play with him

(I don't think he likes it)

(No. I don't think he liked that, did he. Stay close to me)

There must be more variety to life. Is there, mum?

Mum

(What do you want now?)

I'm just going to play over there by the woods

And see what's up there, you know

(You'll soon come gambolling back. You always do)

I just thought I'd find out if there's anything up there, you know, in the woods

I couldn't get through the gate. It was all locked up with padlocks

(Surprise, surprise. Come over here)

It's not fair being cooped up like we are. Are we locked in mum?

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(We like it this way) Yeah, you and all the rest of the sheep. Look at them munching away

What about us lambs, eh? What about us? I hope I always stay a lamb (One day you'll be a sheep. I hope) Then I'll understand.... (Then you'll understand)

#### **Come Inside Love**

Come inside, love It's getting cold out there What are you looking at? There's nothing to see

I'm looking for a spaceship I saw it on TV I saw they're advertising For a pilot – that.s me I want to fly out of this house And miles into the sky Because there's nothing here for me now And everything to see

Come inside, love Your tea is on the table Your father's home and he's hung up his hat He's sitting down with his paper

I'm looking for a new life
And a voyage beyond the stars
I'm looking for take-off and danger
And missions into Mars

I want to fly into the galaxy And far away into another world Because there's nothing here for me now And everything to see

Come inside, love
Your father's getting impatient
He'll clip you on the ear
If you're not careful, lad
He's waiting for his dinner
And we need you here with us
Oh, won't you please come inside, love
And stop making a fuss!

I'm going to Neptune and planet Venus I'm manoeuvring my ship And if you want to come with me

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### Selected Poems by Matt Purland

You're going to have to leave me be Because I'm Captain of my spaceship And I'm on my way to Mars

I'm speaking quickly, Mum You're fading – and your image is fading fast I'm leaving now I'm leaving now And over and out

#### **Keep Going**

I went to school, well everybody goes to school My favourite teacher was a guy who set good books I found the hardest thing at school was how to spell And I'm appalling now, especially when I'm tired

My mother worked and brought me up We were friends until I turned fourteen Then she found herself a man to love her, she would say He was nothing like you, nothing like you

I got married aged nineteen, not to my first love I'm divorced now and a mother to my boys They keep me sane these two, I wouldn't have it any other way And we don't see him any more

I left my second job to have my first son I'm working all the hours I can get I've always kept our head above the water's edge Stopped the water.s ruin

I went north, at first I lived in a cheap place Until a friend was kind enough to put me up So I went looking for a job, and I found work in engineering Something I have always loved

I got my own house and made a friend It's never easy when you're moving on You'll always need to find a person somewhere You can call upon

She brought her girls and all their things and all her clothes We settled down and made a life that wasn't hard We lived as any couple would with two young girls We had our ups and downs like anybody else

Though they were my joy, growing up I couldn't help but think about you And every day that passed I lost another piece of you Like a fool

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One day I'd like to meet the one who'll sweep me from my aching feet Who'll take the ends and make them meet If he exists, that is, my friends say he does not exist But I've always been quite the optimist

If they call I will come running
I will walk through fire forever if they ever want me to
It seems that we have lost the time we needed that could make us friends
And I do not know what to do.

#### Overboard

Under the trees
I can see the train arriving
I know you will be waiting for me
But I know I won't be gone
And the temperature is rising

I brush aside the flies From out of my eyes In the barren waste of a town That was never any good for me

You've got to understand It isn't my fault This time I'm sad, but I can.t go that way

Coming, you're
Walking slowly up the hill
With a weight of expectation
I can't possibly fulfil
Away beyond the trees
I know you won't hear me so
I know you can't see me and
I've got to go

You've got to understand
It isn't my fight
This time
I'm sad, like you never went away
Never went away
My life had gone astray
And your coming back has made me see that

Now I only wanted to be yours I wanted to be only yours I'm overboard Overboard

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### Selected Poems by Matt Purland

## **Speaking German**

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen? is the only German phrase I know Which is great if you want a lift back from somewhere

But not so useful when:

Buying stamps in the post office Booking an appointment at the dentists Ordering a pizza from a company using the phone book Or buying a ticket for the cinema

After three years of German lessons I decided not to take it any further My acquaintance with the language all but ended then Apart from one phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abolen? stayed put, and lodged itself in my mind I would love an opportunity to use it for real

But could I reply to:

Fine, but where do you want dropping off?

Yes, it'll be ten euros

Well, I'm going on somewhere and you're welcome as well, but I won't be driving home till about three at least so –

I'm not sure I'm going your way. OK go on

Vocabulary tests followed one another like a herd of wildebeest Escaping across a plain of blank faces, in flight from the smirking teacher (who spoke only German during lessons) I found myself lost, stuck but for one phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen? always would stand me in good stead Stated with conviction, at sensible intervals, it brought a breath of authenticity

But what if he asked:

Have you learnt your vocab list?
Are you booked on the German trip?
Have you brought your money for the deposit?
Why don't you just listen and pay attention?

Now when I recite the phrase to friends as part of schoolboy past

It brings a look of wonder and, oh you've done well to remember that, I don't know any French and I studied it for five years

I can't help feeling that four hours a week for three years could have taught me more than one phrase

Kohnt ihr mich mit dem wagen abholen?

Yes, but do you want sugar with it?

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### Selected Poems by Matt Purland

## Very Old Apple

I've got an apple in my fridge I'd never eat it. no I don't know what it's doing there And wish that it would go

#### When Soldiers Came

How long will they be in our town Will they be staying overnight And will they try and take us down Will all our men take up the fight

I watched them enter, made no sound Was breathing quiet as a mouse I ran up to the burial mound And saw them stop outside our house

The din they made upon our door Before you could get up they broke A window, knocked you to the floor With batons made from polished oak

The trial was short and hurt me A deserter from your army life The general was amused to see The faces of the child and wife

I kept a diary every day That you were kept away from me And when one year had passed away I threw your clothes into the sea

And watched them sail away, away The other shore would call them home I sometimes see you when I pray With clothes of grey bedecked by foam

## **Buying Things**

There are dandelions growing In the wooden framed greenhouse All the glass has gone now But you can put some more in

The roof of the house will need Attention shortly I'm only sorry that I Didn't have the opportunity to do it

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Would you like a cup of something at all Or must you be Yes we must carry on

My son bought me that Grandfather clock there The case is mahogany; the hands are ebony I never thought I would have owned it

The kitchen is below stairs
I can hear the girls laughing
As they cooked on a summer afternoon
If I listen very carefully

So I think everything is okay You'll let me know If you need any help, won't you?

Of course I'll keep the paintings They're going into storage I wouldn't think of selling What has taken me such an age to buy

This one is a cousin, well loved It's a pretty painting and the detail is there A very clever likeness Yes, a clever little painting

I'm very grateful for The renewed interest you have shown In my house

### On Toblerones

Because Toblerones taste better At room temperature I leave them on the side now To get a bit warm

Their funny shape responds somehow To the moderate heat of Economy 7 On an ordinary March day

I found out to my cost
As being keen to keep my comfort foods fresh
The fridge is where my Toblerone – 400g, big is not the word – was kept

A mistake that I won't make again in a hurry

Some chocolates Such as easter eggs – to name a good example Are infinitely better cool

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### Selected Poems by Matt Purland

And respond to the chill of the fridge And taste much nicer with a crunch

No one likes a soft easter egg

#### **Direct Debit**

#### Monday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat He said, Have you got a minute; to help these problems He told me when I did stop that the problems were getting worse He told me I could really help if I paid by direct debit He asked me if I'd pay by direct debit

#### Tuesday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat He said, Have you got a minute; to help these problems He looked kind of cold as I said, No thanks, sorry. He didn't tell me about the direct debit No, he didn't really get to the bit with the direct debit

#### Wednesday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat He said, Have you got a minute; to help these problems
I felt really heartless as I tried to ignore him, just walk past
I knew he wanted to tell me about the direct debit
I didn't want to get into the thing with the direct debit

#### Thursday

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat He said, Have you got a minute. to help these problems I was on my lunch hour, I was in a rush to buy someone a birthday card He looked at me and in his eyes could be read: direct debit. He'll just have to wait for someone else's direct debit

#### Friday:

Today I saw a man in the street with a clipboard and fluorescent coat He said, Have you got a minute to help these problems I thought, I have got time for people. In fact, I do help. And I like volunteering But I think he only sees in me a direct debit Is he paid commission on the number of direct debits?

## I Have A Rose

I have a rose lain in my drawer
I keep it there in case you leave me
On that day I'll offer it
To you to prove I love you still

You don't know yet about the rose It's hidden with some crumpled laundry

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### Selected Poems by Matt Purland

Lain upon the softest cotton Quietly waiting for its purpose

I bought the rose and hatched this plan When all was peace within your arms The time will come though soon I know When it will be a useful ally

And at the moment when I hold My hand out with my secret flower And colour surges to your face then You will know I love you still

## **Lonely Star**

There's a lonely star shining in the sky tonight
A lonely star shining, breaking up the night
I knew you were watching me from the carousel
It would've been easier if your friends weren't there as well

Could you see me as a poet or an impossible dreamer Do you see me as one of life's lack-lustre politic old schemers I thought of myself as nothing until I met you Did you think the same as me or were you just passing through

You got into a discussion about Tolstoy and Descartes
The only cards I knew about were the ace and queen of hearts
It's only my intolerance that stops you getting through
Did you think the same as me that night or were you just passing through

Kicking open a door you found me asleep in your old chair I wouldn't have been so idle if I'd known you'd find me there Sleeping on the job, my excuses couldn't prove That I'd never met a girl who looked as beautiful as you

Packing up my case that night you had no right to be so calm I'd have stayed if only once – just once – you'd tried to twist my arm My heart was breaking. So long – you couldn't watch me go I would've gone before if I knew then what I now know

So goodbye lonely star. Goodbye to all your friends
And all the people watching me lose who are chewing their tobacco ends
Goodbye from me. I hope you can sleep.
And forget you ever knew me because I seem to have lost that need

## **Official Tour**

It is said that Mary Queen of Scots
Was imprisoned in this house
I think if you look up there at that casement
You can see where her face would have probably looked out

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She stayed in many of the famous country homes Up and down the country I can't think that her life was all that bad What with all the banqueting and jousting

Did they have jousting at that point?

Public enemy number one was Mary Not a particularly lucky lady, but nice I should think As we wander back around to the garden area We can see the stables where her horses probably waited

We think that she was moved from house to house For her own personal safekeeping In my own humble opinion I think it was more a case of Look who's coming round to dinner

Did she actually eat with the other noble ladies?

As you all know of course she was eventually beheaded A cry would have surely rung up from her native land Of course Scotland was her first love and I'm sure always remained so Where she probably wanted to be laid to rest

If you would like to gather near the car park
Just there – yes, that's it – we've nearly finished
Can I say how much I've enjoyed this tour today
And ask you to please stop in at the gift shop before you go to your coach

No, I don't think they would have had a gift shop in Mary's day, no.

## Stowaway To Moon - Latest

When I got home my TV was on
I turned it off when I went out
It gave the same pale light as the moon
I heard a voice trying to shout
A woman's face came on the screen
She made me catch my breath, she looked straight at me

There's a girl lives alone on the moon Nobody knows, I'm the only one Only wants to come home soon Tired of being far from everyone

She told me everything about her life How she'd stowed away in '72 On the last ever rocket to fly to the moon So young, didn't know what to do As she watched it blasting away All alone, no one ever came back her way

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She spent some years by the Sea of Tranquillity Then made a stranded satellite tune into earth TV She picked up signals, all she got was me And for quite some time now she's been trying to make me see her

I asked her, How on earth do you cope, living all by yourself on the moon Too hot by day, too cold at night – with no friends, atmosphere or food? She said she just kind of lived with it Eating moon rock, drinking water from hot springs

She has a face as pale as moonlight And dark eyes, darker than the moon's dark side Shines all day, though sunshine hides her face I knew I had to help her to rejoin the human race

So in the dark, in the garden next door I made a net the size of four small stars I cast it, aimed directly at the moon To my delight I caught it, dragged it down to earth I pulled it closer and heard a sweet sound -The music of the spheres – then she leapt down to the ground

I let go and the moon span back into its orbit She dazzled me, she was glowing - her eyes, her smile, embrace, her kiss On my way home I couldn't have dreamed of this! And that's the whole truth – I'm not trying to lie – I've given you the gist

# Trees Keep Their Secrets Like We Can't

Trees keep their secrets like we can't Long after we are dead they stand up tall Silently growing, strengthening, spreading Watching solidly as we fluctuate, rise and fall

Trees cling to each other like we don't Huddling in gangs with strong high branches Patiently sending themselves to heaven Gossiping in groups and mocking error

Trees know instinctively what we don't How cold it is going to be, when rain will fall Keeping one another notified, tuned in, their knowledge spreads Secretly, tearfully glistening in their light dewy pall

# You Can Only Go Where Your Heart Leads

She calls me up to tell me she's leaving I ask if it's in a hurry but she says she isn't grieving And that sometimes when you're suffering And which way don't like no way, you can only go where your heart leads

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It's a mystery that I for one can stand and watch and see her go But when she smiled and shook her head I felt like anything but low And when we met last Saturday, after the last train had gone, I got down on my knees and asked for her to stay I said, You can only go where your heart leads

And somewhere through the hazy coffee smoke she spoke I heard her voice but no noise broke the chill We agreed to meet after the fourth of July And I got a pretty good picture of how the land was lying Because she was crying

Summertime brought a new perspective on the way that I felt She was calling me but it did not feel real I heard a warning bell, but well, all she did was dispel my fears, and all my tears She said, You can only go where your heart leads, And you can only go where your heart feels

### **That Same Attraction**

I only came because you made me
I wanted not to call you
But I guess that same attraction was there even then
You promised me a dinner
Then we'd walk to the Counter
Along the river, and watch the sun go down

At what point did we go wrong Our plans were carefully set Everything we could have done Was done to keep us falling From ourselves and the rest At what point did we go wrong

We both knew that we shouldn't Be married or together Who could say fairer. At least we both knew that

A definite arrangement What sorrow sweet as parting Standing there my own eyes met yours and I fell transfixed

At what point did we go wrong Our plans were carefully set Everything we could have done Was done to keep us falling From ourselves and the rest At what point did we go wrong

A miracle had happened As you know we both were friends Our sheer imagination had contrived to make us fools again

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I take your hands . . . I hear a sound . . . A sound like 'Please forgive me – let me go'

I kiss your face And I start to fade Back into the furniture Is this our fate?

I kneeled before you I gave you my hand Why can't we go our own way And leave it at that, as we planned?

#### **Motor Moped**

Can you give me an assurance that you mean what you say Will you have sold it when I come back later today I've always wanted a moped, and this is my big chance A brown and solid gleaming motorcycle romance

I don't care if you laugh at me I don't care if I can't really speed Because the person on this moped is me

The person on this moped is me I will polish her politely and touch her body lovingly Won't cover her with stickers, or treat her slovenly We'll be set free as we drive along together And all my friends are saying 'Can't wait to see you in your leathers'

I don't care if you laugh at me I don't care if I can't really speed Because the person on this moped is me The person on this moped is me

Oh what could have made you sell me down the river It's disgusting and childish and makes me want to quiver Say you haven't sold her – please keep me not on tenterhooks I want my pretty moped – don't want any fender books

It's breaching your honour how you put someone on her And watched him ride away – another sale, another day What can you be thinking – my baby's gone and left me My baby's gone and left me – bereft

I don't care if you laugh at me I don't care if I can't really speed Because the person on this moped is me The person on this moped is me

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# Wednesday a.m.

Wednesday a.m.
Sitting on the steps of my lover's house
Looking to the sky for inspiration
Dreaming of a dry wind to melt my perspiration
And I wonder, if things could ever be the same
And I wonder, if you can even recall my name
Or what I said last time we met

I love you, baby I love you, baby I love you, baby

I hope that maybe We can go out tonight

#### At weekends

You were always the one who let me hold your hand Running for the last train after midnight Keeping all my hopes and expectations water-tight And though sometimes I feel that I can take the pain I'm so tired, because all you want to do is play And I can't stay with you that way

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